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German: West rejects missile ban

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By David Minthorn
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MOSCOW — West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher told the Soviet government yesterday that Moscow's proposed moratorium on new nuclear weapons in Europe is unacceptable to the Western allies.

West German sources said.

Genscher, starting two days of talks in Moscow with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, said Moscow's offer was unacceptable because the new Soviet SS-20 missiles are already targeted on Western Europe, the sources said.

Genscher also told Gromyko that the new U.S. administration wants to continue a dialogue with the Soviet Union despite East-West tensions on a number of issues, the sources said.

Meeting with Gromyko for 3½ hours, Genscher emphasized that West Germany would abide by the NATO decision to station 572 U.S.-built Pershing and cruise nuclear missiles in Western Europe by 1984 to counter the Soviet advantage, the sources said.

They said Genscher also reiterated the second part of the 16-month-old NATO decision — to hold immediate negotiations with Moscow on the missile issue before the deployment of the U.S. weapons, planned to start in late 1983.

In a major address in Moscow on Feb. 23, Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev proposed freezing the number of nuclear weapons in Europe at present levels. Brezhnev meets Genscher today.

Western intelligence sources say the Soviets are deploying about 300 SS-20s, giving them a massive first-strike advantage over NATO in Europe.

Genscher urged the Soviets to agree quickly to missile negotiations without pre-conditions, the source said.

The West German government has criticized Brezhnev's moratorium

proposal as a "step backwards" in controlling the arms race.

Genscher, who is second in the Bonn government behind Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, held two days of talks with the Reagan administration last month in Washington.

He assured Gromyko that Washington was following a policy of balanced East-West forces and did not seek military superiority over the Soviet Union, the sources said.

The United States "does not want to be militarily weaker than the Soviets, nor does it seek to be stronger," the sources said. Genscher told Gromyko.

Genscher also outlined his talks in Warsaw last month and said he was impressed by the "seriousness and responsibility" of the Polish government in trying to resolve its labor crisis, the sources said.

The minister also outlined West Germany's economic aid to Poland and emphasized that help was being offered on the basis of strict non-interference in the Communist bloc nation's domestic affairs.

Gromyko did not mention Poland in his discussion of East-West issues, the sources said.

Genscher also urged the Soviets to withdraw their 85,000 troops from Afghanistan, restore its neutral status and thereby stabilize East-West relations.

But Gromyko countered with the known Soviet position — allegations that the United States and China were interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs by arming Muslim insurgents and that the "limited contingent" of Soviet troops would not be withdrawn until this ceases.